

Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Miami Laboratory
75 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, FL 33149

January 30, 2009

TO: Sheryan Epperly,
Protected Resources Branch

FROM: Larry Beerkircher,
POP Observer Coordinator

SUBJECT: Longline gear Incidental Take summary for quarter 4, 2008.

The Miami Laboratory Pelagic Observer Program (POP) is providing you with a summary report of the incidental take of marine mammals, turtles, and birds that have been recorded by observers aboard longline vessels for October 1 through December 31, 2008. The POP completed an overall coverage rate of 8.9 % of the selected pelagic longline fleet for this quarter (Table 1). In addition, the POP monitored experimental fishing in the Florida East Coast Closed Area (Table 2). During the quarter, observers eight (8) marine mammals (2-pilot whale-alive; 3-Risso's dolphin-alive; 2-unid marine mammals-alive), thirteen (13) sea turtles (6-leatherback-alive; 7-loggerhead-alive), and zero (0) seabirds in regular fishery operations. During experimental fishing, observers documented no incidental take of any species.

Attached for you are the original Sea Turtle Life History (STLH) forms submitted by observers during Quarter 4, along with copies of the associated haul logs. The photographs of the sea turtles, and any associated biopsy samples, will also be provided with this document. The POP will maintain copies of the STLH forms in our files until you or Lesley Stokes have completed your data review or entry. I recommend that the original STLH forms be returned to the POP staff or the file cabinets in Rm 324 when the reviews have been completed.

In closing, in addition to the POP reporting of Protected Resource (PR) species recorded during observed longline fishing, observers have been requested to inspect the turtle handling and dehooking gear available aboard the vessels as a requirement of the 2004 Biological Opinion (BO). As a requirement of the BO tasking for the Miami Laboratory, I am providing you, as well as Lance Garrison, with copies of the Miami PR Turtle Gear check list form filled out by the observers from Quarter 4. A PDF file will be created and will be posted on the SEFSC-POP secured website. The originals will remain on file in the observer office, room 314. Analyses associated with Turtle Take Estimates (TTE) nor the Net Mortality Ratio (NMR) mentioned in the 2004 BO are not provided, as the POP staffing does not have the expertise to provide these results.

Attachments

Table (1) of the Incidental Take summary for the fourth quarter of 2008 by geographical area and effort (sets and hook count) observed in the regular fishery; Table (2) of the Incidental Take summary for the fourth quarter of 2008 by geographical area and effort (sets and hook count) observed in the experimental fishery; STLH Forms and associated turtle photographs and biopsy samples, photocopies of the Turtle Gear check list forms.

cc: POP office files;
John Carlson, Jim Bohnsack (cover letters only).

Table 1: Percent coverage (by hauls), the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds), and hook effort summarized by geographical area for October 1 to December 31, 2008 during regular fishing operations.

(A=Alive, D=Dead, U=Unknown. LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, O=other)

AREA	TOTAL HAULS OBSERVED	REQUIRED 8% COVERAGE	TURTLES			MAMMALS		BIRDS	
			A	D	U	A	D	A	D
			LB/LH/O						
GOM-2	105(10.5%)	80	4/	1/0	0	0	0	0	0
FEC-3	11(8.0%)	11	0/	1/0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	15(5.5%)	22	0/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0
MAB-5	43(6.3%)	55	0/	0/0	0	0	7	0	0
NEC-6	12(32.0%)	3	1/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0
NED-7	9(9.0%)	8	0/	5/	0	0	0	0	0
OFF (TUN)	11(14.7%)	6	1/	0/0	0	0	1	0	0
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TOTAL	206(8.9%)	185	6/	7/0	0	0	8	0	0

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
GOM	82,686
FEC	4,792
SAB	7,793
MAB	33,789
NEC	7,955
NED	7,056
OFF (TUN)	15,768
TOTAL	159,839

Table 2: Incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds) and hook effort summarized by geographical area for October 1 to December 31, 2008 during experimental fishing operations.

(A=Alive, D=Dead, U=Unknown. LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, O=other)

AREA	TOTAL HAULS OBSERVED	TURTLES			MAMMALS		BIRDS	
		A	D	U	A	D	A	D
		LB/LH/O						
FEC-3	2	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	1	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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TOTAL	3	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
FEC	704
SAB	449
TOTAL	1,153
